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THE ETHICS OF FETICH-WORSHIP.

At the root of every Fetich lies, or did once lie, something in its poor way true, some kind of fact. Age after age, fetiches appear and disappear; that which one generation approves, the succeeding one contemns; in each case, the eye perceiving in the fetich only that which it brought with it the capacity of seeing. There are general fetiches, and particular fetiches: a general fetich to which millions bow with a common enthusiasm; and a particular fetich, the private property of its owner, to which he does secret service. To the Indian or the savage it may be a little bit of wood hidden in his hair, or an ugly little joss concealed as an amulet about his person; to the civilised devotee it may be an ugly little vice, to which he pays an inconspicuous homage.

A fetich may be abstract or concrete: an idea, a word, a breath, a stick or stone, or human being. Occasionally, the two mingle, and produce a fetich of surpassing importance. As, for instance, when the abstract French fetich 'Glory' was supplemented by the concrete fetich 'Napoleon'—the two together formed a fetich to which whole hecatombs of victims were yearly sacrificed at the commencement of this century. Napoleon, moreover, possessed the advantage of singleness of purpose. He was his own fetich—a fetich as much the object of fear and hatred on this side the Channel, as of worship on the other.

The two—the abstract and the concrete fetich—were never perhaps brought into more striking juxtaposition than when, on a foreign soil, amid aliens to his blood and country, an inheritor of the Napoleonic legend, under the influence of the 'Glory' fetich—met with a cruel death in the morning of life at the hands of savages, who respected what they took to be his fetich, the little iron cross upon his breast, fearing to bring a curse upon themselves.

Among primitive races, every fresh fetich meets with consideration, for, though it may inspire nothing else, it inspires fear. An excla-

mation heard at random, a word neither understood nor sought to be comprehended, will be repeated by a savage, that, haply, it may bring him good, or avert from him evil fortune. It can do no harm, and may do good, like a paper charm, or the 'absit omen' of the Romans. Thus thinks, doubtless, the peasant trudging from market in the west of England to-day, as she gives nine nods to the new moon—a remnant of the worship of Ashtaroth—or turns her purse in her pocket 'for luck'—a shred of sacrifice to the fetich the purse contains, and which it will be no harm to propitiate, provided she can do so unobserved. Yet what an insensate and cruel fetich it is! so hard to come by! so impossible to keep! now for a few happy hours in her pocket, or the stocking, or the old cracked teapot—and now over the counter—never resting in her work-wearied willing hands; but nestling in, sticking to the fingers of old Gaffer Grimes, who will guard it, hoard it, treasure it; deny himself the necessities of life to increase the bulk of his bloated fetich, and finally die a miserable death of starvation, 'worth,' we are told, between thirty and forty thousand pounds sterling. And the fetich having slowly tortured his slave to death, the tidings of his approach are received with such a paroxysm of delight by the next heir—his expectant host—that it is found necessary to shut him up, put him into safe custody, lest his life go with his reason.

How sturdily the fetich demands his victims, and will not be denied! Sir Aylmer Aylmer, 'that almighty man,' as Lord Tennyson calls him, is powerless in the clutch of his 'family pride' fetich, to do less than sacrifice his only daughter in its honour. Honour! what a fetich was in that word during the last two centuries! How many widows mourned for the invaluable lives immolated on the shrine of this Moloch! on the swords of such dishonourable dare-devils as Lord Mohun, for example! Men are to the full as honourable to-day as they were a hundred years ago, yet they no longer feel themselves compelled, at peril of their 'honour,' to risk

blood-guiltiness—or the loss of their own lives—at the instance of a bloodthirsty bully or rash intruding fool.

Supreme and irresponsible authority forms a fetich of which a certain class of minds are so enamoured, that they will at almost any cost procure its impersonation, its exponent. How disastrous the accomplishment of this design may become, Russia has too good cause to remember. To recall only one incident of deference to the autocratic fetich: in 1839, when the Winter Palace was rebuilding at St Petersburg, it was decided that the Emperor should enter on his residence there at Easter. To complete the work in time, intense heat had to be kept up, and this produced all manner of fatal disorders among the workmen. The mortality is described as frightful; yet such was the fanatic respect paid to the dual fetiches, ceremony and autocracy, that the melancholy fact was never mentioned to his majesty.

It has been often said of men that 'they can but what they are.' In art, in science, in daily life, this perhaps is true; but in the formation of a fetich, it is precisely the weak, the timid, who do, out of their own consciousness, evolve a fetich of most diabolic strength. For instance, if a man be possessed of but one idea, and that a wrong one, he will not only evoke a fetich for himself, but, by the power of concentration and example, initiate a very ugly persecution for those who venture to doubt the divinity of his fetich. To do no harm and think no evil is not sufficient in many quarters to ensure a man a quiet life: uniformity is a very exacting fetich. To sing in chorus is, to minds of an unconquerable torpor, not only easier, but more meritorious than to attempt a solo. And so the dull little fetich unanimity, or consistency as it is sometimes called, takes the place of a thoughtful readjustment of ideas, a process which would entail an almost impious exertion of powers enervated by habitual irresolution and disuse.

It is this same gregarious adoration which will induce a whole gallery full of people to manifest extreme appreciation of a sunrise or sunset on canvas, who yet would hardly walk across the room to see the royal reality magnificently set forth outside their windows, and free to all comers. A bit of tapestry, old, ugly, and moth-eaten, but bearing the antiquarian stamp of rarity—the carved oaken sideboard, by Grinling Gibbons of course, for, Juliet notwithstanding, there is still much in a name—whose carved cup leaves afford their owner in their dusty monotony so much more gratification than the living woodland leaves and fruit of which they are the counterfeit presentment; the sumptuous furniture, too costly for every-day use, kept as in a shrine, as something too sacred for aught but contemplation and polishing: these are every-day harmless fetiches.

The gems, no longer valued as talismans or amulets, but rather for their worth in the money market; surely he or she who makes a fetich of these is more sordid, stands ethically on a lower platform, than the Carthaginian Hamilcar, who beyond all his incalculable riches, his pearls, his carbuncles, his diamonds, his three kinds of rubies, his four kinds of sapphires, and twelve kinds of emeralds—beyond and above them all

treasured some dull little bits of rock, probably aerolites, but sacred to his pagan imagination as having fallen from the moon.

In like manner, the stone built into the outer wall of the Kaaba, and daily pressed by the lips of some of the hundred and eighty million of those whose fetich it is—in like manner, it is ennobled, made as it were sacred by the belief in it—the belief that it has shared man's fall from primitive bliss, and that it will share his return to Paradise. This is a fetich that for twelve centuries has maintained its ascendancy over the minds of Orientals. To it we do not think we err in attributing a larger share of that fundamental root of something better than falls to the lot of ordinary fetiches. Knight-errantry and chivalry did good service in their day; and it is possible that they might have had a longer lease of respected existence but for the injudicious exaggeration of some of their more ardent exponents. But the ludicrous side of this exaggerated fetich caught the keen eye of Cervantes, and through his irony the idol became a laughing-stock. As too often happens, much that was noble and elevated fell with the fetich, and even to this day a generous action will be termed 'Quixotic,' when no other epithet can be hurled at it.

In conclusion, it is to be observed that the most reasonable as well as the universal fetich—sought under a thousand forms, in a thousand Protean shapes, for ever a mirage to one, an unexpected visitant to another—a genius capable of infinite transformations to all, is happiness. The cult is one of the uttermost difficulty and of transcendent importance. Too much fear admitted into the mind of the votary, and he straightway fancies himself a being with a perfect organisation for misfortune—that unhappiness is his normal state. If too sanguine, he may live the life of a pendulum, never at rest. And the 'via media' is hard to hit upon. Nevertheless, he who has the best chance of being content with the share of satisfaction his fetich has in his power to bestow upon him is the one who never grudges that another should have a larger share than himself: he who can honestly exult that the good fortune he has missed has fallen to the lot of another, will have a cause for rejoicing as pure as it is unailing.

AT MARKET VALUE.*

CHAPTER XII.—A MOTHER'S DILEMMA.

CANON VALENTINE had intended to stop a week at Venice. He stopped just two days; and then, to Kathleen's secret joy and no small relief, bronchitis seized him. That stern monitor hurried him off incontinently to Florence. 'I'm sorry, Mrs Hesslegrave,' he said; 'I can't tell you how sorry. I'd looked forward to seeing everything in this charming place under your daughter's guidance—she's a capital cicerone, I must say, your daughter; we *did* so enjoy going round the Grand Canal with her the day before yesterday. It's so delightful to

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see all these beautiful things in company with an artist! But the damp of the lagoons is really too much for my poor old throat; we're given to throat-trouble, you see; it's common to my cloth; and as I went along with Miss Hesselgrave to the Academy yesterday in an open gondola, I felt the cold air rise up bodily from the Canal and catch hold of me and throttle me. It took me just so, by the larynx, like a hand, and seemed to choke me instantly. "Amelia," said I at the time, "this chilly air has done for me." And, sure enough, I woke in the night with a tickle, tickle, tickle in my bronchial tubes, which I know means mischief. When once that sets in, there's nothing for it but to leave the place where you are immediately. Change the air without delay: that's the one safe remedy. And indeed, to tell you the truth, Venice is so spoilt, so utterly spoilt, since the Austrians left it, that, except for you and Miss Hesselgrave, I must confess I shan't be sorry to get out of it. Most insanitary town, I call it; most insanitary in every way.

Kathleen could hardly even pretend to regret their departure. During the last two days, she had lived in instant dread that the Canon would somehow knock up against Arnold Willoughby. And if the truth must be told, it was the very same dread on the Canon's part, not bronchitis alone, that was driving him to Florence. For, as they stood on the balcony of the Doges' Palace the day before, looking out upon the Riva and the busy quays and the panorama of the harbour, Canon Valentine beheld a man's back in the distance, rounding the corner by Daniel's, and he said to himself with a shudder: 'Axminster's back—or the devil's!' (Being an old-fashioned clergyman, the Canon, you will perceive, was not afraid of a very mild unparliamentary expression.) And the more convinced he became that the mysterious person thus flitting about Venice was really Lord Axminster, the more desirous did he grow to avoid the misfortune of actually meeting him. For if they met face to face, and caught one another's eyes, the Canon hardly knew how, for very shame, he could let Algy go on with his claim of right without informing him—which he was loth to do—that his cousin Bertie had never been drowned at all, but had been sighted in the flesh, and in sailor costume, in the city of Venice.

There are compromises we all make now and again with our consciences; and there are points where we feel the attempt at compromise becomes practically impossible. Now, the Canon was quite willing to give Algy and his wife the benefit of the doubt, as long as he felt only just morally certain that the person in the street with the trick of twisting his back hair was the last Lord Axminster. But if they met face to face, and he recognised his man without doubt, as he felt sure he must do when they came to close quarters, then the Canon felt in his heart he could no longer retain any grain of self-respect if he permitted the claim to be pushed through the House of Lords without even mentioning what he had seen to Algy. He might have kept silence,

indeed, and let self-respect take its chance, if he met the man alone; but what on earth could he do if he met him, full front, while out walking with Amelia? That was the question. And I may remark parenthetically that most men feel keenly this necessity for preserving their self-respect before the face of their wives—which is a very important ally, indeed, to the cause of all the virtues.

So, on the third morning of his stay, the Canon left Venice. Kathleen breathed freer as soon as he was gone. The load of that gnawing anxiety was much lightened upon her.

That very same day, as it chanced, Arnold Willoughby, reflecting to himself in his own room, made his mind up suddenly to step round in the afternoon and have a word or two with Kathleen. Ever since that morning when they picnicked at the Lido, he had been debating with himself whether or not he should ask that beautiful soul to marry him; and now his mind was made up; he could resist no longer: he had decided that very day to break the ice and ask her. He was quite sure she liked him—liked him very, very much: that she showed unequivocally: and he had waited so long only because he couldn't muster up courage to speak to her. Would it be right of him, he asked himself, to expect that any woman should share such fortunes as his would henceforth be? Was he justified in begging any woman to wait till an obscure young painter could earn money enough to keep her in the comfort and luxury to which she had been accustomed?

He put that question to himself seriously; and he answered it in the affirmative. If he had really been always the Arnold Willoughby he had now made himself by his own act, he need never have doubted. Any young man, just starting in life, would have thought himself justified in asking the girl he loved best in the world to wait for him till he was in a position to marry her. Why should not he do what any other man might do lawfully? He had cast the past behind him; he was a painter sailor now; but why need he hesitate on that account to ask the girl whose love he believed he had won on his own merits if she would wait till he could marry her? Arnold Willoughby would have done it; and he *was* Arnold Willoughby.

So, about three o'clock, he went round, somewhat tremulous, in the direction of the Piazza. He hadn't seen Kathleen for a day or two; she had told him friends would be visiting them, without mentioning their name; and she had given herself a holiday while the friends were with her, from her accustomed work on the Fondamenta delle Zattere.

When he got to the door, Francesca, who opened it, told him, with a sunny display of two rows of white teeth, that the signorina was out, but the signora was at home, if he would care to see her.

Much disappointed, Arnold went up, anxious to learn whether any chance still remained that, later in the afternoon, he might have a word or two with Kathleen. To his immense surprise, the moment he entered, Mrs Hesselgrave rose from her seat with obvious warmth,

and held out her hand to greet him in her most gracious manner. Arnold had noticed by this time the seven distinct gradations of cordiality with which Mrs Hesslegrave was accustomed to receive her various guests in accordance with their respective and relative positions in the table of precedence as by authority established. This afternoon, therefore, he couldn't help observing her manner was that with which she was wont to welcome peers of the realm and foreign ambassadors. To say the truth, Mrs Hesslegrave considerably overdid it in the matter of graciousness. There was an inartistic abruptness in her sudden change of front, a practical inconsistency in her view of his status, which couldn't fail to strike him. The instant way in which Mrs Hesslegrave, who had hitherto taken little pains to conceal her dislike and distrust of the dreadful sailor-man, flung herself visibly at his head, made Arnold at once suspect some radical revolution must have taken place meanwhile in her views as to his position.

'Why, Mr Willoughby,' she cried, holding his hand in her own much longer than was strictly necessary for the purpose of shaking it, 'what a stranger you are, to be sure! You never come near us now. It's really quite unfriendly of you. Kathleen was saying this morning we must write round to your chambers and ask you to dine with us. And *she* hasn't seen you for the last day or two on the Zattere, either! Poor child, she's been so occupied. We've had some friends here, who've been taking up all our time. Kitty's been out in a gondola all day long with them. However, that's all over, and she hopes to get to work again on the quay to-morrow—she's so anxious to go on with her Spire and Canal; wrapped up in her art, dear girl—you know it's all she lives for. However, she'll be back at it, I'm glad to say, at the old place, in the morning. Our friends are just gone—couldn't stand the climate—said it gave them sore throats—and Kathleen's gone off to say goodbye to them at the station.'

'That's fortunate,' Arnold answered a little stiffly, feeling, somehow, a dim consciousness that, against his will, he was once more a lord, and lapsing for the moment into his early bad habit of society small-talk. 'For the lights on the Canal have been lovely the last three days, and I've regretted so much Miss Hesslegrave should have missed them.'

'Not more than *she* has, I'm sure,' Mrs Hesslegrave went on, quite archly, with her blandest smile—'mother's society smirk,' as that irreverent boy Reggie was wont to term it. 'I don't know why, I'm sure, Mr Willoughby, but Kathleen has enjoyed her painting on the quay this winter and spring a great deal more than she ever before enjoyed it. It's been a perfect treat to her. She says she can't bear to be away for one day from that dear old San Trovaso. She just loves her work; and I assure you she seemed almost sentimentally sad because these friends who've been stopping with us kept her away so long from her beloved picture.—And from her fellow-artists,' Mrs Hesslegrave added after a pause, in some little trepidation, uncertain whether

that last phrase might not go just one step too far in the right direction.

Arnold Willoughby eyed her closely. All his dearest suspicions were being fast aroused; he began to tremble in his heart lest somebody had managed to pierce the close disguise with which he had so carefully and so long surrounded himself. 'Will Miss Hesslegrave be back by-and-by?' he asked in a coldly official tone. 'Because, if she will, I should like to stop and see her.'

Mrs Hesslegrave jumped at the chance with unwise avidity. This was the very first time, in fact, that Arnold Willoughby had ever asked to see her daughter in so many words. She scented a proposal. 'Oh, yes,' she answered, acquiescent, with obvious eagerness, though she plumed herself inwardly as she spoke upon her own bland ingenuity; 'Kathleen will be back by-and-by from the station, and will be delighted to see you. I know there's some point in that last year's picture she's touching up that she said she wanted to consult you about, if possible. I shall have to go out myself at four, unfortunately—I'm engaged to an At Home at dear Lady Devonport's; but I daresay Kathleen can give you a cup of tea here; and no doubt you and she can make yourselves happy together.'

She beamed as she said it. The appointment with Lady Devonport was a myth, to be sure; but Mrs Hesslegrave thought it would be wise, under the circumstances, to leave the young people alone with one another. Arnold Willoughby's suspicions grew deeper and deeper. Mrs Hesslegrave was one of those transparent people whose little deceptions are painfully obvious; he could see at half a glance something must have occurred which gave her all at once a much more favourable view of him. He measured her doubtfully with his eye. Mrs Hesslegrave in return showered her sweetest smile upon him. She was all obsequiousness. Then she began to talk with ostentatious motherly pride about Kathleen. She was *such* a good girl! Few mothers had a comfort like that in their daughters. The only thing Mrs Hesslegrave couldn't bear was the distressing thought that sooner or later Kathleen must some day leave her. That *would* be a trial. But there! no mother can expect to keep her daughter always by her side: it would be selfish, wouldn't it?—and Kathleen was adapted to make a good man so supremely happy. And then Mrs Hesslegrave, leaning forward in her chair, grew almost confidential. Had Mr Willoughby noticed that Mr Mortimer, the rich young American, thought so much of Kathleen? Well, he certainly did; he quite haunted the house; though Mrs Hesslegrave believed in her heart of hearts Kathleen didn't really care one bit for him. And she was a girl of such high principle! such very high principle! Unless she truly loved a man—was fascinated, absorbed in him—she never would marry him, though he were as rich as Croesus. Kathleen meant to come back by the Zattere, she believed; and she knew Mr Mortimer would be waiting there to see her; he always hung about and waited to see her everywhere. But Kathleen was such a romantic, poetical-minded girl! She would

rather take the man of her choice, Mrs Hesslegrave believed—with an impressive nod of the coffee-coloured Honiton head-dress—than marry the heir to all the estates in England, if he didn't happen to please her fancy.

As she maundered on, floundering further into the mire each moment, Arnold Willoughby's conviction that something had gone wrong grew deeper and deeper with every sentence. He shuffled uneasily on his chair. For the first time since he had practically ceased to be an Earl, he saw a British mamma quite obviously paying court to him. He would have liked to go, indeed, this queer talk made him feel so awkward and uncomfortable; it reminded him of the days when adulation was his bane: more still, it jarred against his sense of maternal dignity. But he couldn't go, somehow. Now the doubt was once aroused, he must wait at least till Kathleen returned—that he might see her, and be rid of it. Yet all this strange dangling of inartistically-wrought flies before the victim's eye was disagreeably familiar to him. He had heard a round dozen of Mayfair mammas talk so to him of their daughters, and always in the same pretended confidential strain, when he was an Earl and a catch in London society; though he confessed to himself with a shudder that he had never yet heard anybody do it quite so fatuously, transparently, and woodenly as Kathleen's mother. She, poor soul, went on with bland self-satisfaction, convinced in her own soul she was making the running for Kathleen in the most masterly fashion, and utterly unaware of the disgust she was rousing in Arnold Willoughby's distracted bosom.

At last, Arnold's suspicions could no longer be concealed. The deeper Mrs Hesslegrave probed, the more firmly convinced did her patient become that she had somehow surprised his inmost secret, and was trying all she knew to capture him for Kathleen; and trying most ineptly. This sudden change of front from her attitude of sullen non-recognition to one of ardent sycophancy roused all his bitterest and most cynical feelings. Was this day-dream, then, doomed to fade as his earlier one had faded? Was Kathleen, the sweet Kathleen he had invested to himself in his fervid fancy with all the innocent virtues, to crush his heart a second time as Lady Sark had once crushed it? Was she, too, a self-seeker? Did she know who he was, and what title he bore? Was she allowing him to make love to her for his money (such as it was) and his earldom?

With a sudden resolve, he determined to put the question to the proof forthwith. He knew Mrs Hesslegrave well enough to know she could never control her face or her emotions. Whatever passed within, that quick countenance betrayed to the most casual observer. So, at a pause in the conversation (when Mrs Hesslegrave was just engaged in wondering to herself what would be a good fresh subject to start next with an Earl in disguise whom you desired to captivate), Arnold turned round to her sharply, and asked with a rapid swoop, which fairly took her off her guard: 'Have you seen the English papers? Do you know what's being done in this Axminster peerage case?'

It was a bold stroke of policy; but it committed him to nothing, for the subject was a common one, and it was justified by the result. Mrs Hesslegrave, full herself of this very theme, looked up at him in astonishment, hardly knowing how to take it. She gave a little start, and trembled quite visibly. In her perplexity, indeed, she clapped her hand to her mouth, as one will often do when the last subject on earth one expected to hear broached is suddenly sprung upon one. The movement was unmistakable. So was the frightened and hesitating way in which Mrs Hesslegrave responded as quickly as she could: 'Oh, yes—that is to say, no—well, we haven't seen much about it. But—the young man's dead, of course—or, do you think he's living? I mean—well, really, it's so difficult, don't you know, in such a perplexing case, to make one's mind up about it.'

She drew out her handkerchief and wiped her forehead in her confusion. She would have given ten pounds that moment to have Kathleen by her side to prompt and instruct her. Arnold Willoughby preserved a face of sphinx-like indifference. How dreadful that he should have boarded her with that difficult and dangerous subject! What would Kathleen wish her to do? Ought she to pretend to ignore it all, or did he mean her to recognise him?

'Is he dead or living? Which do you think?' Arnold asked again, gazing hard at her.

Mrs Hesslegrave quailed. It was a trying moment. People oughtn't to lay such traps for poor innocent old women, whose only desire, after all, is the perfectly natural one to see their daughters well and creditably married. She looked back at her questioner with a very frightened air. 'Well, of course, you know,' she faltered out, with a glimmering perception of the fact that she was irrevocably committing herself to a dangerous position. 'If it comes to that, you must know better than any one.'

'Why so?' Arnold Willoughby persisted. He wasn't going to say a word either way to compromise his own incognito; but he was determined to find out just exactly how much Mrs Hesslegrave knew about the matter of his identity.

Mrs Hesslegrave gazed up at him with tears rising fast in her poor puzzled eyes.

'Oh, what shall I do?' she cried, wringing her hands in her misery and perplexity. 'How cruel you are to try me so! What ought I to answer? I'm afraid Kathleen will be so dreadfully angry with me.'

'Why angry?' Arnold Willoughby asked once more, his heart growing like a stone within him as he spoke. Then the worst was true. This was a deliberate conspiracy.

'Because,' Mrs Hesslegrave blurted out, 'Kathleen told me I wasn't on any account to mention a word of all this to you or to anybody. She told me that was imperative. She said it would spoil all—those were her very words; she said it would spoil all; and she begged me not to mention it. And now I'm afraid I have spoiled all! Oh, Mr Willoughby—Lord Axminster, I mean—for Heaven's sake, don't be angry with me. Don't say I've

spoiled all! Don't say so! Don't reproach me with it!

'That you certainly have,' Arnold answered with disdain, growing colder and visibly colder each moment. 'You've spoiled more than you know—two lives that might otherwise perhaps have been happy. And yet—it's best so. Better wake up to it now than wake up to it—afterwards. Miss Hesslegrave has been less wise and circumspect in this matter, though, than in the rest of her conduct. She took me in completely. And if she hadn't been so ill advised as to confide her conclusions and suspicions to *you*, why, she might very likely have taken me in for ever. As it is, this *déclairement* has come in good time. No harm has yet been done. No word has yet passed. An hour or two later, the result, I daresay, might have been far more serious.'

'She *didn't* tell me,' Mrs Hesslegrave burst out, anxious, now the worst had come, to make things easier for Kathleen, and to retrieve her failure. 'It wasn't *she* who told me. I found it out for myself—that is, through somebody else'—

'Found out *what*?' Arnold asked coldly, fixing his eye upon hers with a stony glare.

Mrs Hesslegrave looked away from him in abject terror. That glance of his froze her. 'Why, found out that you were Lord Axminster,' she answered with one burst, not knowing what to make of him. 'She knew it all along, you know; but she never told me or betrayed your secret. She never even mentioned it to *me*, her mother. She kept it quite faithfully. She was ever so wise about it. I couldn't imagine why she—well, took so much notice of a man I supposed to be nothing but a common sailor; and it was only yesterday or the day before I discovered by accident she had known it all along, and had recognised the born gentleman under all disguises.'

Mrs Hesslegrave thought that last was a trump card to play on Kathleen's behalf. But Arnold Willoughby rose. 'Well, you may tell Miss Hesslegrave,' he said stiffly, 'that if she thought she was going to marry an English Earl, and live like a Countess, she was very much mistaken. That was wholly an error. The man who loved her till ten minutes ago—the man she seemed to love—the man who, thinking she loved him, came here to ask for her hand this very afternoon, and whom she would no doubt have accepted under that painful misapprehension—is and means to remain a common sailor. She has made a mistake—that's all. She has miscalculated her chances. It's fortunate, on the whole, that mistake and miscalculation have gone no further. If I had married her under the misapprehension which seems to have occurred, she might have had in the end a very bitter awakening. Such a misfortune has been averted by your lucky indiscretion. You may say good-bye to me to Miss Hesslegrave when she returns. It is not my intention now to remain any longer in Venice.'

'But you'll stop and see Kathleen?' Mrs Hesslegrave exclaimed, awe-struck.

'No, thank you,' Arnold answered, taking his hat in his hand. 'What you tell me is quite

enough. It is my earnest wish, after the error that has occurred, never as long as I live to set eyes on her again. You may give her that message. You have indeed *spoiled all*. It is she herself who said it!'

SCUTTLED SHIPS.

SCUTTling may be defined as the act of cutting holes through a ship's hull, either for the praiseworthy purpose of keeping her steady when stranded by filling the hold with water, and thus save the ship and cargo; or to sink her in order to obtain the money for which she is insured. It is the latter form of scuttling that we propose to deal with.

A ship-master is monarch of all he surveys, when remote from the land, and no other sail above the boundary-line of sea and sky. Hence, there would be little difficulty in his way, should he propose to scuttle his ship, either to injure or to assist the owners thereof. For this reason, the laws against scuttling have always been very severe all over the world. By an Act of Congress passed in 1804 it was enacted that 'any person, not being an owner, who shall, on the high seas, wilfully and corruptly cast away, burn, or otherwise destroy, any vessel unto which he belongeth, being the property of any citizen, or citizens, of the United States, or procure the same to be done, shall suffer death.' Our own laws were similar. The last man executed in England for ship-scuttling was Codling, hanged on Deal beach about 1804 for scuttling a vessel in the Downs in order to obtain the sum for which she was insured. Less drastic laws prevail now, and the gravity of such a case is met by penal servitude, and the cancelling of certificates should the offenders be ship-masters or officers.

In 1866, a Mr T. Berwick was convicted of being accessory to the scuttling of several fully insured sailing-ships belonging to the firm of Messrs T. Berwick & Sons. The system adopted by this proficient ship-scuttler was only remarkable for its extreme simplicity, and stood the test of many years' active service; for he subsequently confessed that he had defrauded the underwriters in this way by causing no fewer than nine well-conditioned ships to be scuttled during the period of twenty years immediately preceding his last venture. His master-mind conceived the plot each time; but seafaring men were the necessary instruments for carrying out his ideas. He would prevail upon needy, and not over-nice, certificated officers of our mercantile marine to sink the respective ships whenever in their opinion convenient; and he paid handsomely for the services so efficiently rendered in these disgraceful transactions. Happily for the underwriters, however, this wholesale ship-destroyer either had his wonted caution dulled by such unprecedented success as attended his investments; or perhaps made a mistake in his calculations. The long hands of the law gripped him tightly at last, and all the shipping world wondered for a brief interval. This unprincipled merchant, and his three nautical accomp-

plices, Webb, Holdsworth, and Dean, were rightly awarded long terms of penal servitude.

The good ship 'Severn' was the cause of their misfortune. She sailed away ostensibly for China, in good condition, and laden with a costly cargo; but the crafty conspirators had agreed among themselves to put a period to her existence long before nearing the Flowery Land. In pursuance of this understanding, three large holes were bored through the after-part of her hull, below the water-line, by means of that carpenter's implement so much affected by ship-scuttlers, an auger, almost directly the shores of England had receded below the northern horizon. Wooden plugs were carefully fitted into the holes thus made, and admirably served the purpose for which they were designed. One or all could be withdrawn and replaced at the will of the operator, concealed from the prying eyes of the sailors; and in this way it was quite easy to keep the supposititious leak both under control and intermittent until the moment arrived that was deemed suitable for the abandonment by those in possession of the secret. An accident, however, interfered with the well-laid plans of these men. One of the plugs was unexpectedly broken, the intruding water would not be denied, and she was perforce abandoned earlier than was proposed.

Webb had taken an active part in some of the previous successful scuttling for the same firm of speculators; and, after sentence had been passed, disclosed to the underwriters the full details of one case. He had sailed from Glasgow, bound for Havana, with a cargo of coal, in the good ship 'John Brown,' which disappeared on the passage, although all hands were rescued by a passing ship. She was scuttled by Webb; but the underwriters paid the large sum involved without inquiry. Before leaving Glasgow, a bulkhead, or partition, was built up by a carpenter engaged from the shore. In this way, a clear space was left in the hold directly beneath the mate's cabin, so that, after getting to sea, a hole was cut in the cabin floor, enabling Webb to descend into the hold unperceived by any one and pierce the vessel's side below the water-line with an auger to his heart's content. A similar system was followed in the other instances, and fickle fortune certainly seemed to smile sweetly upon the unholy alliance during a long period.

The scuttling of the Nova Scotia barque 'L. E. Cann' probably affords the most remarkable example of this nefarious practice that has come to light throughout the Victorian era. In November 1881, this wooden sailing-vessel happened to be in the harbour of Vera Cruz awaiting a charter, under the command of a certificated master named Brooks. She was staunch, quite as well supplied with stores as is usual in that inferior order of sailing-ship, and, under ordinary circumstances, should have carried a cargo to any port without mishap. Captain Brooks had held his responsible position for about two years, and had made several satisfactory voyages with her. His uncle owned one-sixteenth of the vessel, and covered the risk by insurance in the accepted manner. In February 1882, this part owner wrote to his

agents requesting them to insure his interest in the freight for another five hundred dollars; but this was not done, inasmuch as the agents had just previously insured the total freight, under instructions from the managing owner. Hence the 'L. E. Cann,' and the whole of her prospective earnings on the ensuing passage, were at least insured to the uttermost farthing, if not somewhat in excess thereof.

At far-off Vera Cruz, however, a foul conspiracy was entered into between Captain Brooks and a Spanish merchant, one Campos, who transacted the ship's business at that port, which boded ill for the profit-and-loss account of such underwriters as should undertake the insurance of the doomed barque, her cargo, and her freight. Campos agreed to put a comparatively worthless lot of timber on board as cargo, and insure it heavily, as though quite equal in value to similar cargoes sent from Mexico. Brooks bound himself to take on board a portion of this rubbish at Vera Cruz, to complete loading at another Mexican port, thence to proceed towards New York, and eventually to scuttle her at the first favourable opportunity. Accordingly, the 'L. E. Cann' was filled up to her hatches with a cargo which was only worth about forty per cent. of the amount set forth on the bills of lading; and, so far, these *hostes humani generis* seemed on the high-road to a competency, despite the precept that honesty is the best policy, which would doubtless appear rather old-fashioned to such partners in crime. Campos readily insured his bogus cargo, and awaited the course of events. Brooks, for his share in this infamous transaction, was to receive six thousand dollars. One-third of this sum he received on signing the bills of lading at Vera Cruz, one-third at the next loading-port, and the balance was to be paid him immediately the unsuspecting underwriters had settled in full for the total loss of the 'L. E. Cann' and her curious cargo.

Before setting sail, Captain Brooks wrote to his managing owner to the effect that the vessel was chartered to take a cargo from Mexico to New York for the lump sum of six thousand dollars, and the amount of freight was at once insured. She left Mexico on 30th March 1882; and, just one month later, her master did his worst to carry out his part of the criminal contract. While in the Gulf Stream, the 'L. E. Cann' was observed to be flying signals of distress, and apparently rapidly sinking. An American schooner bore down upon her in order to render assistance, in compliance with the request. A boat from the water-logged barque brought all her crew to the waiting schooner, and the 'L. E. Cann' was abandoned to wind and wave, a dangerous obstruction to navigation. The schooner brought the shipwrecked seafarers safely to Philadelphia. Unfortunately for Captain Brooks, however, it is not in mortals to command success, nor did he deserve it. The barque was not so easily despatched as he fondly imagined. On the 24th May she was fallen in with, strange to say, by a specially fitted salvage steamer, which towed her to Norfolk, Virginia. There she was placed in dry dock, and her trouble became clearly revealed even to the

most superficial observer. No fewer than fifteen auger-holes appeared in her hull below the water-line, and she would undoubtedly have foundered had it not been for her timber cargo.

The salvors were awarded five thousand dollars to compensate them for labour and expenditure, and the 'L. E. Cann' was sold, by order of the United States District Court. At a forced sale, only three thousand dollars were obtained for her, and this amount was handed over to the salvors. Captain Brooks confessed that the holes found in her hull had been bored by him with an auger; and, under the circumstances, the shipper of the bogus cargo thought that discretion was the better part of valour, and did not press for the insurance money. The vessel herself was insured for four thousand dollars, and her managing owner demanded payment thereof, on the ground that she was a constructive total loss. In less technical terms, it would have cost him more to recover the vessel from the salvors than she was actually worth before the scuttling; and therefore, so far as he was concerned, the 'L. E. Cann' was a total loss. The underwriters refused to pay, for several reasons; and the lawyers reaped a golden harvest owing to this scuttling by Captain Brooks, which almost deprived the innocent owners of the vessel from obtaining that insurance to which they were justly entitled. The managing owner secured judgment in his favour in two actions before the courts of Nova Scotia; but, on appeal, the underwriters succeeded in getting these decisions reversed in the Supreme Court by three judges to one. Thereupon, the case was carried to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which upset the finding of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia; and the underwriters had to pay not only the amount of insurance, but also the enormous costs that had accrued.

Wooden ships as a rule are chosen by those desirous of defrauding underwriters by scuttling. Still the iron or steel vessel is not altogether free from their attentions. As we write, a large iron four-masted sailing-ship, the 'Falls of Afton,' is making her way up the English Channel with a goodly cargo of golden grain. One page in her life's history is very instructive. In 1882, when brand-new, she sailed from Glasgow for Calcutta with a valuable cargo of iron, railway sleepers, and coal. All went well till news reached her owners that this fine vessel of nearly nineteen hundred tons register had been picked up derelict in the North Atlantic, and taken to Madeira, by a French vessel. She was found drifting about; but the fate of her crew remained undetermined for several days. They had sought safety in a passing vessel, and reached home in due course. As usual in such cases, a Board of Trade inquiry was held to ascertain the cause of the abandonment of such a well-built vessel on a summer sea in fine weather. The court cancelled the master's certificate because he had permitted the sluice in the collision bulkhead to remain open, had cut a suction-pipe in the after-end of the ship, and had turned the water into the hold, in order to scuttle the ship. No sane person would have acted thus;

and the master was not proved to have acted in collusion with any one to defraud the underwriters, so that it seems reasonable to suppose that he was not responsible for his actions.

Still more recently, a Dundee shipowner named Hobbs has endeavoured to make a record in the business of ship-scuttling. In August 1891, the small vessel 'Da Capo,' of one hundred and sixty tons, belonging to Hobbs, foundered about twenty-five miles from Montrose. Just three days before Christmas of the same year, another small craft, the 'Greetjelina,' belonging to that merchant, met a like fate, not far from the place where the restless waters of the North Sea rolled over the 'Da Capo.' If we remember rightly, several other vessels belonging to Mr Hobbs reached his favourite dumping-ground in the vicinity of Montrose, and followed each other to the bottom in quick succession. The underwriters naturally became somewhat suspicious, and searching inquiries were instituted into the nature of a trade demanding the sacrifice of so many thoroughly insured vessels and cargoes. They found that Mr Hobbs was in the habit of buying worn-out vessels of uncertain age, patching them up temporarily, sending them to sea well insured, and persuading his creatures to scuttle them. The profits were great; but the peculiar nature of the business was not without risk. He was at once arrested, together with a confederate, whose name, by a strange coincidence, is the same as that of the ship which led to the downfall of Berwick and his gang referred to above; and, after a patient trial, they were both sentenced to a long term of penal servitude.

On the 21st September last, the master of the Brixham trawler 'R. I. E.' was charged with having 'unlawfully and maliciously cast away his ship.' She left Tenby on the 24th of August; and two days later, water was discovered in the hold. The men went to the pumps; and one who had been below testified that he found the leak to be caused by two auger-holes near which he found an auger and signs that it had been used not long before. The vessel was a new one, the weather fine, sea smooth, and yet she went to the bottom. Her master has been committed for trial at the assizes.

The very latest instance of scuttling that has come under our notice is that carried out by a master now awaiting trial, at Seattle, Washington, for casting away the schooner 'Mary Parker' on the 29th of December, and trying to collect two thousand five hundred dollars insurance for a cargo worth just half that sum. She was taken to sea, a number of holes bored below the water-line in her hull, and upon removing a board temporarily fastened over the holes, the vessel foundered at the will of her master. The Marine Journal of New York states that he has made a full confession of the crime.

Underwriters are a long-suffering race, of necessity, for competition among them is so keen that they frequently prefer to pay even when in doubt as to the honesty of the insurer, rather than that their action be misconstrued and custom scared away. The system of ship-insurance is not by any means free from imperfection, and occasionally verges upon gambling. Some of

the better class of ship-owning firms underwrite their own ships; others do so up to a specified percentage of their value; but in far too many firms the ships and their prospective earnings are insured even beyond a liberal valuation. A dishonest owner is thus tempted to act as a sleeping partner in the scuttling of a fully insured ship. Undermanning is more marked every day, and although it renders vessels unfit to keep the sea in stormy weather, yet the terrible competition among underwriters allows it to flourish at home. In the East and China, however, the insurers combine for their common protection; and not infrequently cargo-steamers on arrival at Hong-kong are compelled to ship more men than the number deemed sufficient when leaving England, as otherwise the local underwriters and insurance companies would not insure the vessels. Ship-owners grumble, but they comply with the restrictions notwithstanding. Similar regulations are necessary over here. Having regard to the enormous number of vessels afloat, and the fierce competition among underwriters, it is matter for sincere congratulation that scuttling is so seldom the cause of loss to-day.

MORE THAN CORONETS.

CHAPTER III.

THE new order of things appeared to come about at Deepdene in the most natural manner possible. There was a little flutter of excitement at first, a disposition on everybody's part to see the new owner, and then everything settled down in the old groove—the machine went on as usual; nothing appeared to be disturbed, save that one or two of the servants accompanied De Ros and his daughter to the Dyke, which was situated just beyond the park gates. Dene de Ros took his deposition grandly. The old order changes, giving place to new; but nothing can debase the good and just man struggling with adversity. Dene de Ros owned defeat, but he could not fall.

For a year now the new owner had reigned in his stead; and, if a little heresy may be permitted, the estate was no worse for the change. Ambrose was unspeakably human; he was approachable; unlike his stern, unbending relation, he could feel for the misery which he had experienced. The cottages on the estate were improved, long-standing grievances alleviated, nothing neglected. And the county took kindly to Ambrose. He lacked the outward gloss and polish; but he had a native dignity and refinement of his own which fenced him round with the same dignity that doth hedge a king. He was a clever man, too; he started to educate himself with the fervour of a young man. Before twelve months had elapsed, he could read and write well. The books he read were a revelation to him. With early advantages behind him, Ambrose would have died a great man. And yet, despite the breadth of his ideas, despite his admiration for Adam Smith and Mill, nothing was altered at Deepdene. He regarded the oaken panels and gleaming armour, the storied device on the windows, with solemn and respectful awe.

'It's a big responsibility to follow those who are gone,' he said a score of times. 'They made the family what it was; they helped to make history too; and I've got to keep up their traditions.—David, lad, it's a very solemn undertaking that's put upon me.'

David was wont to listen respectfully. It was impossible for any one to carry out the burden laid upon his shoulders better than his father did. 'People say things are more satisfactory than they were,' he said. 'I am certain that no one is any worse for the change.'

'I hope not,' Ambrose said with simple solemnity. 'This is a trust which I hold under Providence. Out there, where I was for weeks at a time without seeing a single human soul, I used to wonder and dream what I should do if I had a lot of money left me. I said that mankind should be the better for it; and they are, though perhaps I shouldn't say so. The labourers are better paid, they've got decent cottages to live in.'

'Things will be better still,' David replied, 'when you get rid of Swayne.'

It was the one sore point between father and son. To a certain extent, Swayne had assumed his old position, and many were the private acts of tyranny perpetrated by him that never came to the ears of his employer.

'I owe all I have to him,' Ambrose said slowly. 'It was he who found me out, and placed me in my present position; and I don't see that he benefited much by all the trouble that he took.'

'He is steward of the estate at a good salary,' David said parenthetically.

'And a good servant, mind. I know nothing against him,' Ambrose went on, as he lowered his voice impressively, 'except that there was something wrong, a few years ago, when he held his present position before. He told me all about that honestly and honourably, and that's why I gave him another chance.—David, lad, when a man makes one false step, a cruel world is again givin' him another chance; and that's how criminals is made.'

In his earnestness, Ambrose dropped into the old vernacular. It was not often that David heard it now, and it was not displeasing to him. It brought vividly before him the recollection of the simple-hearted shepherd who deprived himself of everything for the sake of his boy.

'And yet I don't trust Swayne,' David answered.

'I don't myself,' was the somewhat startling reply. 'Mind you, I can lay my hand upon nothing; he does his work well; and yet, when his voice is in my ears, and his face before me, there's something here near my heart that keeps on whisperin', "He's a scoundrel—he's a scoundrel." But I don't listen to it, because I argue that it's nothing more than sinful prejudice. But the voice is never silent.'

David changed the subject. There were other things to think of, of much more importance than Swayne. The younger man sighed impatiently as he looked round the library and then out across the lawn. He had everything that makes life worth living—good health, good looks, and the reversion of a fine estate—and

yet there lay across his couch not a crumpled rose-leaf, but a trail of thorns. He was like the little boy crying for the moon.

It was not the moon he wanted so much as one bright particular star—Vera de Ros. It was impossible to be in her company long without being attracted to her—to be attracted and repelled at the same time. And David felt that unless he could win Vera for himself, all the rest was weariness of the flesh.

And she would have none of him; she repelled him gently and coldly, leaving him with an uneasy feeling that she cared for him all the time. Perhaps she did; but the demon of pride stood in her way. She liked David better than any man she had ever met; her respect and esteem for Ambrose was great, and yet they had between them deprived her of her inheritance. Hers, too, was the passionate pride of race; the blood in her veins was of the blue azure, whilst that of David was but a muddy stream. His mother had been a daughter of the soil, as was her mother before her; and birth was part of Vera's religion.

And yet she liked David. It was in her hands to say whether she should return to Deepdene and reign as its mistress again. She knew that she had only to unlock the flood-gates of her passion and abandon herself to an affection which, with all her resolution, she could not stifle. And here the element of pity came in. David only wooed her from a sense of justice. Could she accept as a lordly gift that which was morally her own?

Of course David knew nothing of this. He wandered out upon the shaven lawn, where the peacocks were sunning their Argus-eyed fans, flashing a purple and golden sheen; he watched the deer browsing in the hollow. From the quaint pigeon-house, the doves fluttered down to his feet. He stood there chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy. The sky was clear overhead; but up from the sea came bands of trailing purple. The breeze blew on his face with fitful puffs. Far up in the empyrean, the gulls wheeled and circled, uttering plaintive cries.

'We shall have a storm before the morn, sir,' remarked one of the gardeners with a tug at his forelock. 'The gulls came in from the Clef Rock quite early. Ah, you should see this coast in a gale!'

'I haven't seen one yet, though I have been here a year,' David laughed; 'and I must say I don't see any signs of a storm at present.'

The rugged old countryman shook his head knowingly as he passed on. At the same moment, a figure crossed the rustic bridge and came rapidly towards the house. It was Dene de Ros, his features stern and contracted. He did not appear to see David for a brief space.

'You look as if something had happened,' the latter remarked.

'I did not notice you, David,' Dene de Ros replied.—'Yes, something very unpleasant indeed has happened, not that it concerns me personally, only your father ought to know at once. Where is he?'

By way of reply, David led the way through the dim cool hall to the library, where they found Ambrose struggling with a mass of

accounts which Swayne had just left for his inspection. He looked up with a smile, which evaporated as he noted the thundercloud on his visitor's brow. 'What is it?' he asked quietly. 'I see there is something wrong, cousin.'

'It is that scoundrel Swayne,' Dene replied, keeping his passion down with difficulty. 'I always warned you that you were dealing with a rascal, and that you were foolish to give him another chance. He has gone upon a new tack this time altogether, since there is no longer any chance of robbing the estate upon a large scale.'

'He wanted money badly,' Ambrose interposed. 'He made a little fortune out there in land, which he invested in the New Tasmania Bank. He came to me in great distress yesterday with the news of its failure.—Don't be too hard upon the poor fellow, Dene.'

'I declare you are the most exasperatingly lovable man I ever met,' Dene exclaimed, smiling in spite of himself. 'Because a rascal loses money, which he probably obtained by questionable means, I am to be sorry for him. That man robbed me of hundreds of pounds; I discharged him without a character; and by the fortune of war, he discovered you. That was his revenge, as he thought; but there he was utterly mistaken. It caused me no great pain to do what was right.'

'You are a good man,' Ambrose said huskily—'one of the best of men.'

Dene de Ros waved the compliment aside impatiently. His face flushed, as if he were ashamed of that generous praise.

'But,' he went on, 'when your exaggerated gratitude caused you to bring that man home, and keep him about you, I was annoyed. Do you suppose he would have troubled about you, had it not been for striking a blow at me? The first intimation I had of your existence was a letter from Joshua Swayne saying he had discovered the son of Leslie de Ros, and asking ten thousand pounds for his silence.'

'Why wasn't I told this before?' Ambrose demanded quietly. His mouth had grown harder, his blue eyes flashed. 'I ought to have known. Forgive a man once, I say, give him a chance; and if he fails in his duty again'—

'But you were set upon him. Besides, I always had a comfortable conviction that if you gave the rascal rope enough, he'd be sure to hang himself. And I don't suppose you will care to look over the last escapade, because it concerns the poor.'

'Ah!' There was a world of meaning in the exclamation. 'Go on.'

'Well, I happened to be riding past one of the new cottages by the church yesterday, when I heard Swayne threatening one of the women there. Certain words which came to my ear roused my suspicions, and I returned presently. After a little persuasion on my part, the whole thing came out. It appears that the tenant's name is Meakin, one of the new labourers from Surrey.'

'A superior man for his class,' Ambrose observed. 'Very independent; but a good workman, and a firm believer in trades-unionism.—Never mind what your opinion of that is; please to go on with the story.'

'Well, the woman was angry. It appears that the cottage was let for half-a-crown per week; whilst, as a matter of fact, it is honestly worth five shillings. In collecting the rent, Swayne, it appears, always demands four shillings, and gets it too, for these people know when they are well off, and fear of Swayne getting them out of their holdings seals their mouths.'

'Oh! Then Swayne pockets every week something like forty sums of eighteenpence—that is, if he does the same everywhere.'

'Which he does,' Dene de Ros went on, with a little malicious delight in the discomfiture of his successor. 'I called at several more of the cottages, and had it out with the wives. Of course, I assured them that no harm could come to them; after which they spoke freely. I find all the labourers on the home-farm are paid twenty-two shillings. There are about forty of them; and Swayne, under threat of dismissal if they complain, gives them a pound each. It is by no means a bad way of adding nearly five pounds a week to one's income.—But you can test this for yourself.'

Ambrose de Ros rose to his feet, his lips trembling, and his hands tightly clenched. His gentle, innocent mind recoiled with loathing. Bad enough to plunder the rich; but when it came to the poor and lowly, he was filled with righteous indignation. He looked like the incarnation of an avenging Providence.

'This must be seen to at once,' he said. 'Will you come with me? I have to meet Swayne at Meakin's cottage presently; and if what you say proves to be true, then you will see that I can be just.'

As the two strode along in the direction of the village, a silence lay upon them. They reached the labourer's cottage at length. It was past one o'clock, and Meakin was at home, a powerful, burly-looking man, with a clear eye, and a manner somewhat independent. Swayne, looking mean and cunning as usual, was conversing with him.

The steward's face fell a little as he saw the angry gleam in the eye of his employer. He would have spoken, but Ambrose put him aside.

'Meakin,' he said slowly and distinctly, 'I have found you honest and straightforward, and I want a truthful reply to my question. Why, when the rent of your cottage is half-a-crown weekly, do you pay Swayne four shillings? And why do you take a sovereign on Saturday, when you know that you are entitled to two shillings more?'

Swayne gasped; his cunning face grew white and ghastly. He signed swiftly to his victim; but the latter smiled in reply. The man saw his advantage; something told him that the day of tyranny was past.

'Because I was bound to, sir,' he replied bluntly.—'Ah, I know what a steward can do when a man offends him. They can ruin a man. And because, even as things are now, I'm forty per cent. better off than I was before I came here, I kept my tongue between my teeth. I have not wronged you, sir, only myself. And if you knew what it was to starve, you'd know how that takes all the pluck out of a man.'

'I do know,' Ambrose said quietly. 'I don't blame you, Meakin, or any of you; I blame myself for trusting to a villain. Do not be afraid to speak, for he shall rob you no more. Tell me if you are the only one, or does he treat you all the same?'

'There's no favour shown,' Meakin replied with grim humour. 'Mr Swayne's kind enough to treat us all alike. Go down the cottages, sir, and see if I'm not tellin' you gospel truth.'

Ambrose turned away, all his anger gone. In its place there welled up a feeling of bitter disappointment. He had trusted this man; he had put aside his prejudices; he had been deceived.

'The way of the world is beyond me,' he murmured. 'I would not have had this happen for anything.—I would have found you what money you required. Come to me in an hour's time. By then, I shall know what to say.'

The speaker felt too upset to pursue his investigations further; he sat on the edge of the old stone drinking fountain which stood under the shadow of the church, whilst the others finished the unsavoury task. Ambrose felt quite as dejected and cast down as Swayne himself. The latter had reckoned upon the simple-mindedness of his employer. The labourers and cottagers were under his thumb; not one of them would dare to charge him with his malpractices. And now it had all come out, and ruin stared him in the face.

There was no fear of prosecuting, of course; Ambrose de Ros would have cut off his right hand first. There was strength and comfort in the reflection as Swayne crept into the library an hour later, and found himself face to face with the man he had wronged. And yet he felt no remorse; he only burned for vengeance against Dene de Ros, who had brought all this about. The latter appeared to have scored a triumph at every turn. There was one other card that Swayne had to play, his final effort. He knew all the secrets of the house, every nook and cranny; he had been a privileged and trusted servant for years. His eyes gleamed; there was a sullen flush on his face as he scraped his leathery jaws with a rasping, unstable forefinger. But he could not face the white-haired, sweet-faced giant who stood before him.

'I'm not going to bandy words with you,' Ambrose said slowly. 'You had a good chance, and you lost it. I trusted you, and you have betrayed my confidence by robbing the poor, God's poor. You are no longer a servant of mine, Joshua Swayne; you can go.'

But Swayne was not quite easy in his mind; he wanted to be absolutely certain as to the remoteness of a criminal prosecution; yet he simulated no remorse before the most credulous of men. 'You will not take any steps against me?' he asked sullenly.

'Unto seventy times seven, I could forgive; but it doesn't follow that I'm going to find employment as well, Ambrose replied with a quaint admixture of humour and solemnity. 'I couldn't have believed it, Swayne.'

'We never do till we find a man out,' Swayne muttered. 'Mr Dene de Ros was angry

and scornful; he is a gentleman, of course; he wouldn't demean himself by a dirty action. He's a man of honour, like that Brutus chap in a play that I once saw, and he behaved like an aristocrat when he heard of you, didn't he? And yet he's as bad as me.'

Ambrose crossed over to the door and locked it. The words apparently were innocent enough, but they seemed to inflame De Ros to madness. His blue eyes blazed as he laid his hands upon Swayne, and shook him to and fro as an ash-tree is shaken by the wind. 'Explain,' he said between his teeth; 'come, your meaning.'

'Don't you strike me,' Swayne said fearfully. 'I suppose you can read?'

The sneer went harmlessly over the head of Ambrose de Ros. 'Yes,' he said simply; 'I can now, as well as you. But don't keep me waiting. I'm slow to anger, but beware how you rouse my passion. Speak, man.'

'Very well, I will,' Swayne burst out, his venom giving him courage. 'You're curious as to that casket of Del Roso's; therefore, look into it, and read carefully all you find there. I'll say no more, if I die for it. But search and read, and tell me what you think of Dene de Ros then.'

The look of expectation, dread, almost fear, died out of Ambrose's eyes. He unlocked the door and pointed to the hall. 'You are too late,' he said. 'I knew all that the casket has to tell long ago. Yes; I mete out to all men the latitude I gave to you. And if you ever dare to trade upon the secret which you have stolen, it will be the worse for you. For, of all enemies that a man can choose, the worst is the honest being whose trust he has so shamefully betrayed. Now go, and never let me see you again.'

Swayne crept away humiliated, almost ashamed. He had fired his mine; it had exploded harmlessly into the air.

Ambrose remained behind. He looked up to the wild gray sky, changed since morning; he saw the oaks on the hill tossed by the forefront of the gale. 'He must never know,' he murmured. 'That one great sin shall be forgiven.'

SOME UNWRITTEN BOOKS.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE in one of his pleasing reveries suggests the original and fanciful idea of a library composed not of books written and published, but of works left incomplete through lack of time or power of achievement. He would, in Milton's words,

Call up him who left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold,

and obtain the untold Canterbury Tales of Chaucer's pilgrims, the continuation of Coleridge's 'Christabel,' and the completion of Keats's grand fragment of 'Hyperion.' To this imaginary library a less delicate taste might perhaps add those works thought of, planned, or commenced, which yet, for more or less obvious reasons, have never reached the printer. Of these, no insignificant part would be connected with the name of Coleridge, the 'man of infinite title-pages.' In

addition to the 'Christabel,' which he often talked of completing, folios innumerable would find a local habitation on these immaterial shelves. Charles Lamb, in the playful letter to his friend Manning which contained an imaginary notice of Coleridge's death, scarcely exaggerated his fecundity of schemes and procrastinating method of work, when he says: 'Poor Col.; but two days before he died, he wrote to a bookseller, proposing an epic poem on the Wanderings of Cain, in twenty-four books. It is said he left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism, metaphysics, and divinity, but few of them in a state of completion.' It is true that 'Poor Col.' was continually projecting new schemes, and for ever failing to carry them into execution. Southey in one of his letters says: 'As to your Essays, &c., you spawn plans like a herring; I only wish as many of the seed were to vivify in proportion.' Coleridge once read to his friend Cottle the publisher, from his pocket-book, a list of eighteen different works, not one of which he ever wrote. For many years he meditated a heroic poem on the Siege of Jerusalem by Titus; and amongst other projected works were a Treatise on the Corn-laws, a History of German Belles-lettres, a Book of Morals in answer to Godwin, an Essay on the Writings of Johnson and Gibbon, a poetical pantomime, and a 'kind of comedy.' 'I should not think of devoting less than twenty years to an epic poem,' he writes—'ten years to collect my materials and warm my mind with universal science; five were to be spent in its composition, and five in its correction. His tastes and inclinations were undoubtedly catholic; but persistent effort in any one direction was ill suited to the genius of Coleridge, and he was content with his books and his opium, and the consequent glorious dreaming.'

Another opium-eater, De Quincey, was nearly as prolific with his projects, and more energetic in his attempts to give them shape. In his 'Confessions' he says he had devoted his life to the production of a great work, to which he had 'presumed to give the title of an unfinished work of Spinoza's, namely, *De Emendatione Humani Intellectus*.' One need scarcely regret that it never reached the printer. At another time his idea was to write a Prolegomena to all Future Systems of Political Economy, which ambitious enterprise was twice advertised, and arrangements were made with a printer for its publication. This, however, was abandoned, and no more troubled the bibliographer than the famous 'Typical Developments' by the Philosopher in 'Happy Thoughts.' Another scheme was a new History of England in twelve volumes. After he was seventy, he still harped upon the subject, and said that he could finish it in four years.

Goldsmith was almost as fertile with his schemes as either of the great opium-eaters, and often raised money on some projected work, then put it aside, and started another. He once drew up a Prospectus for a Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, and obtained promises of help from his friends Johnson, Reynolds, and Burke; but the book-sellers were too wary for once, and the scheme fell through. One of his last proposals was The Survey of Experimental Philosophy, which met with the same fate. Even the more practical Dr Johnson could himself devise and not undertake.

He once thought of writing a Life of Oliver Cromwell, but it is as well perhaps that he changed his mind. His constitutional indolence was too great to admit of his undertaking many great literary enterprises, and, unlike Coleridge, he was well aware of the fact. He dawdled over his edition of Shakespeare for nine years, although he had promised it in a year, and only finished it in consequence of the attack of Churchill, who accused him of cheating his subscribers :

He for subscribers baits his hook,
And takes your cash : but where's the book ?
No matter where ; wise fear, you know,
Forbids the robbing of a foe ;
But what to serve our private ends
Forbids the cheating of our friends ?

It was Milton's early ambition, as everybody knows, to write an epic on the subject of King Arthur. At one time he even contemplated rewriting the story of Macbeth, and would no doubt have followed the severe classical model, in startling contrast to Shakespeare's treatment. The idea of an epic on the subject of Arthur also captivated Dryden, as also did the story of the Black Prince ; but his smooth and elastic couplets were reserved for dramatic and satiric purposes. Sir Walter Scott thought that an epic on the exploits of King Arthur from the pen of Dryden would have been a glorious monument of English genius as well as a record of native heroism. As a specimen of the bad taste of that age, it might be mentioned that Dryden once thought of turning the 'Paradise Lost' into rhyme, and a few years later it was suggested that Pope should dramatise that grand poem.

Gibbon once meditated a Life of Raleigh, and began to collect materials for the purpose. After reading Oldys' Life of the great Elizabethan, he relinquished the design, modestly thinking 'he could add nothing new to the subject except the uncertain merit of style and sentiment.' He decided to 'embrace a safer and more extensive scheme,' and successively chose the History of the Liberty of the Swiss, and the History of the Republic of Florence under the Medici, before that famous day in Rome when he sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, and the idea of writing the Decline and Fall of the city first started to his mind.

Isaac Disraeli, in his interesting sketch of Oldys the antiquary and his manuscripts, refers to the 'masses of curious knowledge now dispersed or lost.' Oldys once contracted to supply Ten Years of the Life of Shakespeare unknown to the Biographers ; but he did not live to fulfil the engagement, and, says Disraeli, 'that interesting narrative is now hopeless for us.' Although he made vast collections of biographical and literary curiosities, he made but little practical use of them ; and Disraeli pictures him as 'breathing a self-reproach in one of those profound reflections of melancholy which so often startle the man of study, who truly discovers that life is too limited to acquire real knowledge with the ambition of dispensing it to the world :

I say, who too long in these cobwebs lurks,
Is always whetting tools, but never works.'

Sir Walter Scott's latest literary project, conceived at Naples in the last years of his life, was to edit Mother Goose's tales with antiquarian and

mythological notes ; and one must regret that the curious and out-of-the-way learning of Scott was not to be devoted to that purpose. The abandonment of his contemplated Lives of Peterborough and John, Duke of Argyll, was less serious.

Of course this list might be extended indefinitely, if the unwritten books of mediocre writers were admitted, or of those ambitious persons who plan some 'magnum opus' far beyond their power of execution, and which is no more likely to illuminate the world than Mr Casaubon's learned 'Key' or Mr Caxton's History of Human Error.

THE CHAIN-MAKER'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER II.—CONCLUSION.

FINDING herself free, Janet decided to go to her mother's sister, Aunt Janet, who lived at the church-end of the town. As she approached the church, she was surprised to see the figure of Dan seated on the stile, smoking, in deep meditation.

Janet's first impulse was to turn back ; but at that moment Dan looked up, and hastened to meet her. 'Janet !' he cried, in tender rapture.

'Dan ! Oh Dan !' In a moment she was in his arms ; tears and sobs came thick and fast, to the relief of her swelling heart.

'What's happened, Janet ?'

'I've quarrelled with daddie,' she sobbed.

'About me ?'

'Yes, yes, Dan. He abused you shamefully.'

'Never mind, lass ; words don't harm.'

'And—and—called me names that— Oh Dan ! I thought he loved me. I've been dutiful ; and he's been so—so steady, and careful and tender to me since mother died—I—I—could never think it— Oh, such words ! I couldn't stay with him after them.'

'Then you've left him ?'

'Yes, yes—I couldn't stay.'

'What are you going to do ?'

'I don't know ; but I won't go back.'

'Then come with me to Sheffield.'

'No, no, Dan ; that would look as if we'd run away.'

'But to my Aunt Betsy. She'll give you a home ; and I'll soon get a job ; the strike's ended ; and I'll have a cot of my own for you before long.'

'Nay. I'll go to my Aunt Janet ; she'll tell me what's best. She has a large family of her own ; but she's always a kind and motherly word for me.'

'It's hard to leave you, sweet one ; but I shall come over often—every week-end.'

So, with prolonged caresses, they parted, and Janet hurried on to her aunt's.

That large-hearted woman was holding the youngest of six in her lap, and rocking with her foot another in the cradle, while she combed the hair of a wriggling boy of five. 'Dear o' me ! what's happened ?' she asked, as Janet seated herself with a face plainly betraying her distress.

Her niece quickly told her what had taken place, and of her father's abusive language.

'An' you've left him ?'

'Yes, aunt.'

'An' I glory in your pluck. Serves him right. He's been a bully o' his life. He lorded it over our Jane, until he ground all t' spirit out o' her. But her would have him, spite o' all we'd said; an' now, poor lass, her's dead an' buried. If he'd had me, I'd'—

'Don't talk of that, Aunt Janet. Tell me what I must do.'

'What yo' must do?'

'Yes. Can I stay here? I fear you have no room to spare.'

'Oh, yo' can stay here, an' welcome, lass. We'n room enough. Yo' can sleep wi' little Jim here.—But stop a bit; let me think. If yo' stop here, Hibden 'ull be coming for yo'; an' that'll never do. Our Jim'ud order him out o' t' house; an' then there'd be a row. An' tho' he's a bigger mon nor Jim, our Jim 'ud never give in while he could raise a arm. He's a little un, but he's a rare plucky un, is Jim.'

'Then what can I do, aunt?'

'Go to yer Uncle George at Sheffield. Our George has neither chick nor child, an' his wife was allus fond o' yo'.'

'Yes; I think that is best.'

'Have yo' any brass, Janet?'

'Yes, aunt, a little.'

Janet, after listening to her aunt's directions, and motherly admonitions to have nothing to say to fellow-travellers, man or woman, set out for her Uncle George's at Sheffield.

This was Janet's first railway journey alone; her nerves were at full tension; she clung tenaciously to her third-class ticket, and looked eagerly at every station sign, lest she should pass her destination, to the great amusement of more experienced travellers.

While in a deep reverie, in which Dan figured, she suddenly remembered that Dan's home was in Sheffield. What if he was on the train? Then her thoughts drifted off to her father; and she was picturing his storming at her aunt's, when the train dashed into a great black, smoky station, and she realised she was in Sheffield.

A good-natured old porter advised her to take a cab to her uncle's, as it was fully two miles, and the road confusing. This she did; and after many windings and turnings—which convinced her she could never have found the house alone—she was put down at the door. She discharged the cabby, and was about to knock at the door, when she found, to her dismay, the house was empty: a 'To Let' card in the window directed applicants to No. 19. To that number she went, and knocked.

A cheerful, tidy, old woman, and a wholesome odour of hot muffins, came to the cottage door.

'Can you tell me where George Herlock has gone?' asked Janet.

'George Herlock, lass! Why, bless you, he's been gone to America these three months.'

'Uncle George gone! Oh dear, what must I do?' she cried with a look of consternation.

'Did you expect to find him, lass?'

'Yes, yes. He never wrote; but—but'—

'Have you come far?'

'Yes; from near Birmingham.'

'Then come in and rest a bit, and have a cup o' tea; you'll be tired,' said the tidy old woman,

with that kindly hospitality which is the first impulse of Midland housewives. She saw that the girl was in genuine trouble, and her heart went out to her in sympathy.

'I've known your Uncle George this many a year,' continued the good woman, after she had induced Janet to take off her hat. 'Your father's brother, belike?'

'No; my mother's. She was a Herlock.'

'Ay, ay; I remember he told Dave, my good-man. He's a night watchman, my dear. He's just getting up. You will have a cup o' tea wi' us—there's only us two.'

'Oh, it's very kind of you; but I ought to go—go—home; it will be very late.'

'You can stay all night, lass, an' Dave shall see you off in t' morning.'

When her husband came down-stairs, the childless mother told him where the girl had come from.

'Why,' said Dave, 'that's just like Geordie! I told him to write; but he kept a-putting it off until he forgot it, belike.'

Presently, as Janet was seated before the hot muffins, feeling perfectly secure with this whole-souled Yorkshire couple, there came a knock at the door.

'Well, who can that be?' asked the wife, going to the cottage door.

As she opened it, Janet heard her exclaim:

'Well, well, well—it's my lad,' and the sound of a smothered hug and kiss.

Then the tones of a manly voice that sent the blood surging from her heart into her cheeks, as she rose from the table and reeled with giddy delight.

'Dave, it's Dan come home,' cried the old woman.

Dan strode into the room, and was reaching out his hand to his uncle, when he caught sight of Janet. In a moment she was locked in his arms, to the astonishment of Uncle Dave and Aunt Betsy.

'It strikes me you've been at that game afore, Dan,' said Uncle Dave as Dan released Janet.

'She's my sweetheart, uncle.'

'Ow, ow! You sent her on before, then?'

'No. I don't know how she got here.—What train did you come by, Janet?'

'The train from Dudley Junction.'

'Ah! that's it. I came on the North-western, from Birmingham.'

Janet did not return the next morning, or the next month, for the childless Betsy, with the motherly heart, would not hear of it.

The morning after Janet's flight, when Hibden rose, he was confronted with a desolate home. The fireless grate with the accumulated ashes smearing the generally snowy hearthstone; the rashers of cold bacon looked ghastly; the unwashed dishes still littered the table, as they had been left the day before. A sense of his helplessness came over him, for never in the course of his life had this domestic tyrant lifted a hand to help himself. After several trials, and many imprecations at its persistent smoking, he managed to light the kitchen fire. He warmed up the coffee left from the day before, and with some bread and butter made a far from hearty breakfast. Then lighting his

pipe, he sat before the fire, contemplating the dismal scene. At noon, he set out for Aunt Janet's, for he had come to the conclusion that was his daughter's only place of refuge.

'Well,' said that muscular woman, as Hibden presented himself at the door, 'what do yo' want here?'

'I want Janet.'

'Her's none here.'

'Her has been, then?'

'Ay, her has been,' said Mrs Jim tartly.

'Where is her now?'

'Her's none here'—with a grim smile.

'Her's run away fro' home; her's none o' age, an' onybody as harbours her, I'll ha' up afore magistrates.'

'Oh! yo' 'll have um up, will yo', Bob Hibden?'

'Ah, I will.'

'Yo' 'll find um first.'

'I'm none so far off finding um now. Will yo' tell me where her is?'

'No; I won't. There! you have it flat, Bob Hibden.'

'An' why?'

'Because yo' 'n ill-used her. Yo' 'n made a slave o' her, an' yo' 'd bully her into her grave, as yo' did her poor mother.'

'I don't want none o' your slandering tongue—nor I'—

Her husband came up for his dinner at this juncture. 'Now, Bob Hibden, I'll none ha' yo' bullying my wife,' said 'Bantam Jim, bristling up.

'Get thee in t' t' house,' said his wife; 'this is none o' thy business;' and Jim suddenly found himself pushed into the kitchen with one jerk of his wife's muscular arm.—'An' as for yo', Bob Hibden, yo' 'll never know fro' me where her is.' Then she banged the door in Hibden's face, and barred it, to further emphasise her determination.

Hibden went home fuming with rage.

The next day, he reluctantly called in old Granny Crip, of No. 6, to tidy up his house and provide his meals.

He returned to his work with a new helper; but the loss of his daughter was never out of his mind.

After Granny's advent, all the gossips in 'Hibden's Row' knew of his misfortune. Some pitied him, and some did not; the general opinion was that in his disgrace he would turn to drink. Some one told him of seeing Dan and Janet together in the fields on the morning of her disappearance, and this convinced him and the gossips that they had eloped.

Weeks passed, and no tidings came of her. The bull-pup Bendigo whined from room to room, seeking her with piteous cries, which caused his master in his own acute sorrow to lament: 'Ay, lad; we 'n both lost a friend, one as we 'n never get the like on again.' Hibden had cherished his daughter while she was with him much as he had loved his dog; but now that she was lost to him, he suffered with all the pangs of paternal bereavement, for he considered her lost. He often pictured her wandering about the streets an outcast, for he had no faith in Dan's honesty of purpose. As month followed month, and no tidings came of

her, his once florid face grew sallow and haggard; his appetite failed; and he gave up his job at the chain-works, a physically broken man. Then he moped about the house or the meadows, with Bendigo always at his heels. He shunned the public-house and drink, to the surprise of his neighbours, and gradually there settled upon him a determination to find the man who had desolated his home, and if they met, to destroy him. He carried a heavy oaken stick for the purpose.

It was reported in the chain-works that Dan had gone to America. At first, Hibden believed this report; but finally remembering Dan had come from Sheffield, he decided to go there and make inquiries. His first two visits to the great straggling town were fruitless—no one seemed to know of such a man. Still, he kept up his search for many months, until one night he encountered Uncle Dave on his way to work. After they had exchanged the usual observations of the night, Hibden asked: 'Do yo' happen to know a man named Helm, Dan Helm?'

Uncle Dave was about to answer, 'Ay, he's my neevie,' when something in the haggard visage of the stranger caused him to modify his reply. 'Ay, I do,' he said.

'He's gone to America, they say?'

'Ay, he has. Did you know him?'

'Ay. He ran away wi' my daughter.'

'Oh! Then you want him, belike!'

'I want to get this stick on his skull,' said Hibden, swinging the oaken stick threateningly.

'You would kill him?'

'Ay, I would, if I swung for 't,' cried Hibden, his face livid with anger. Then he told Uncle Dave the months of agony he had suffered at the loss of his beloved child.

The Yorkshireman listened to his tale, deeply pitied him, and finally said: 'Happen it's na as bad as you think. I'll make some inquiries, an' I'll write an' let you know when I've any news.' With this they parted.

Uncle Dave thought it prudent not to reveal at that time all he knew without consulting his wife. Dan and Janet had been married soon after they joined the old couple; and later, at the urgent request of a relation, Dan had gone to the States to a good situation. He wrote home that he was prospering, and that he would come and fetch his wife in the August following.

When Uncle Dave told Aunt Betsy of his meeting with Hibden and the threat, she would not consent to Janet being told of it in her present delicate condition.

But in July, something occurred which decided Uncle Dave to attempt a little diplomacy of his own. He wrote to Hibden to come over the next Sunday, as he had some news for him. When Sunday came, and Uncle Dave met him at the station, Hibden eagerly asked: 'What is the news?'

'Come to the parish church and you shall see.'

At the church he showed Hibden the register, and read to him the record of the marriage on October 10, 187-, of Janet Hibden, spinster, and Daniel Helm, bachelor.

When the chain-maker heard this, the

muscles of his face twitched convulsively, and he cried with a husky voice: 'Thank God, it's none so bad as I thought.'

'I told you it mightn't be,' said Uncle Dave.

'I can't tell yo' what a comfort that is to me, for I feel as if I'm none for long i' this world; an' it's lifted a load fro' my mind to find as—as—he did the honest thing by her. God bless her! wherever her is. I've made my will, an' left all I have to her an' her childer, if her has ony.'

'I'm fain to hear you'n come to that sensible conclusion, Mr Hibden.'

'I don't know how to thank yo', master, as I'd like; I'm beholden to yo'—I'—'

'Don't mention it, Hibden.—But you *can* do me a good turn to-day,' said Uncle Dave as they left the church.

'Mention it, an' I'll do it willingly.'

'We're i' trouble at our house.'

'What's up?'

'There's to be a christening to-day. Rather sudden; child's weakly, an' mother main't live.'

'Oh! yer child?'

'No; it's a niece o' mine. She's had a bit o' bad news, an'—an' it brought her down sudden-like.'

'What's happened?'

'Her husband's away from home, an' she's got word he's nearly killed in a explosion in t' foundry. Well, it's a question if she'll live; an' she's anxious to have the child christened afore she dies. Parson's coming this afternoon.'

'Oh, I see.'

'My missis is to be t' godmother; an' I'll be one godfather'—'

'An' yo' want me to be t'tother?' asked Hibden.

'Ay. You've neither chick nor child, an'—an' this little lad will—may soon be without father or mother. I thought it would do yer heart good to do something like this.'

'Oh, it will. I'll do it willingly.'

When they arrived at Uncle Dave's, they found the curate waiting. He had been into the back-room, where a bed had been placed, to comfort and encourage the helpless little mother, and now he was seated by the fireplace, while Aunt Betsy was nursing Janet's child.

When the two godfathers came in, the parlour door was closed; but as the curate began the baptismal prayer, Janet softly asked the nurse to open it a little, so that she could hear the curate's supplication.

Bob Hibden knelt to his Maker for the first time since the death of his wife; as he did so, he experienced an indescribable feeling of consolation and contentment.

Then the minister sprinkled the child, and concluding, said: 'David Hibden Helm, I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.' As the curate handed the child back to Aunt Betsy, Hibden grasped Uncle Dave's arm and exclaimed: 'Is yer name Helm?'

'Ay. And it's my neevie's name.'

'Whose child is this?'

'Your grandchild.'

'Mine! An'—an'—is—is—my lass—my Janet

dead?' and great scalding tears trickled down his cheeks.

Just then, there came from the little back-room a long quivering, wailing cry, which shaped itself into the words: 'Daddie, daddie! oh daddie!' Janet had heard him, and her shattered heart could not suppress the appeal.

In a moment he had burst into the room and held her in his arms. 'Ah, Janet, my lass, my lass!'

'Oh daddie, daddie! thank God He's sent you to me.'

'Amen, lass—amen; an' He's saved yo' for me.'

And when, soon after, Aunt Betsy brought in the baby to them, their reconciliation was complete.

A few days later, Uncle Dave received a letter from his brother in America saying Dan's injuries were not so dangerous as at first reported, and that he was in a fair way to complete recovery. This cheered the little mother. She began to improve so that, within a month, she was nursing her baby by the fireside at Hibden's Row.

In the autumn, Dan returned strong and well. When he presented himself at the cottage door, Hibden met him on the threshold and said: 'Come in, lad—come in, an' welcome. There was a blind owd donkey lived here a year ago as refused yo' his daughter; yo' mun reckon him as dead an' gone, an' forget o' his hard words, an' the trouble he's caused yo'. Here's yer wife an' baby well an' hearty; an' theer's mi hand; an' if yo' 'll let bygones be bygones, an' always be kind to Janet—for, God knows, she's nearly died for love o' yo'—yo' 'll find no better friend nor Bob Hibden.'

WITH THE MIND'S EYE.

The rasping sound of steel on steel;

A score of footsteps on the stair;

The clink and whir of rod and wheel,

The voice of Labour everywhere—

Along the wharf the waters lift

A sluggish current, dull and brown:

With low black hulls, that slowly drift

Beyond the smoke-encircled town.

But fairer scenes before me rise—

The sunny slope, the brooklet clear;

Or where the water-lily lies

In silver on the silent mere;

Where rounded summits, clothed with green,

Are sweet with summer's passing shower;

And rippling rivers flow between

Wide fields, aglow with bud and flower.

Oh forest glade! oh wind-swept hill!

At morn so fresh, at eve so fair,

Whose lightest recollection still

Has power to lessen daily care.

Though Life in narrower groove be cast,

Though days be dark, and skies be gray;

The memory of the happier Past,

Nor greed nor power can snatch away.

R. STANSBY WILLIAMS.

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